

LESSON 18

DEPRESSION

"If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."

Genesis 4:7

"But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves."

James 1:22

LESSON 18: DEPRESSION

Depression is not a disease. While there are some organic malfunctions that may trigger feelings of depression, most symptoms and maladies defined as depression (whether short-lived or chronic) are the consequences of unbiblical habits and/or sinful reactions to circumstances and other people. Depression that stems from unbiblical living can be overcome as you deal biblically with your sins and purposefully live in a manner that is pleasing to the Lord (based on Genesis 4:3-7, esp. verse 7; Psalm 32:1-5; 42:11; 55:22; 119:28, 50, 75-77, 143, 165; John 15:10-11; II Corinthians 1:3-6; James 1:22-25).

I. The purposes of this lesson are:

- * A. To help you understand that depression does not provide an excuse for you to live in an unbiblical manner;
- * B. To remind you that depression may be experienced by anyone and must be dealt with from God's perspective and not from your own perspective or any other person's philosophies;
- * C. To present a biblical plan to overcome depression; and
- D. To provide opportunity for you to help someone deal with feelings of depression in a biblical manner through the continuation of a case study.

II. The outline of this lesson

- A. Self-confrontation
 - 1. **BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES: DEPRESSION** (Lesson 18, Pages 2-3)
 - 2. **UNDERSTANDING DEPRESSION** (Lesson 18, Pages 4-7)
- B. Steps for spiritual growth
 - 1. **OVERCOMING DEPRESSION** (Lesson 18, Pages 8-13)
 - 2. **MY PRESENT SCHEDULE** (Supplement 15)
 - 3. **MY PROPOSED BIBLICAL SCHEDULE** (Supplement 16)
 - 4. **LESSON 18: HOMEWORK** (Lesson 18, Page 15)
 - 5. **STUDY GUIDE FOR DAILY DEVOTIONS** (Lesson 18, Pages 16-17)
- C. Biblical counseling
 - A CASE STUDY: MARY'S HUSBAND HAS LEFT HER** (Lesson 18, Page 14)

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES: DEPRESSION

Even if you feel depressed, you are still to live biblically (based on Psalm 19:7-11; 119:92-93, 143; John 15:8-12, 16-17; I Corinthians 13:4-8a; Philippians 4:13; Colossians 3:17; James 1:22-25; I John 2:6). Your thoughts, words, and actions are always to edify others and bring glory to the Lord instead of just obeying God's Word when you "feel like it" (based on I Corinthians 10:31; II Corinthians 10:5; Ephesians 4:29; Philippians 2:3-4, 4:8-9; Colossians 4:6).

JESUS IN
THE GARDEN

I. God's View

(Principle 78) Symptoms defined as "depression" are sometimes precipitated by sin (based on Genesis 4:3-14; Psalm 32:3-5, 38:1-10), which means you are living to please yourself instead of living to please the Lord. If you do not repent, confess your self-centeredness, and return to living in a biblical manner, you will experience even further difficulties (based on Psalm 32:3-4, 38:1-4; Colossians 3:25; Hebrews 12:5-11).

(Principle 79) To love life and see good days, you must turn from doing evil and be obedient to God's Word (I Peter 3:10-12). In spite of "feeling depressed," you can live biblically because of the divine resources that God graciously provides for you (based on Psalm 19:7-11; 34:18-19, 119:28, 105, 143, 145:14; Matthew 11:28-30; Romans 8:11-14, 26; II Corinthians 12:9-10; Philippians 4:6-7, 13; Hebrews 4:15-16).

Also applicable:

(Principle 16, from Lesson 6, Page 2) The way you feel and the way you view yourself, your relationships, and your circumstances are often indications of whether you are living to please yourself or living to please God (Genesis 4:6-7; Psalm 119:165; John 14:27, 15:10-11; Romans 14:17-18; II Corinthians 7:10; Philippians 4:6-7; I John 4:18-21).

II. Your hope

(Principle 80) No matter how difficult any situation appears, the Lord Jesus Christ has overcome it (John 16:33). God will not allow anything into your life that is beyond His control or beyond your ability to endure it without sinning (based on Genesis 50:20; Jeremiah 29:11; Romans 8:28-29; I Corinthians 10:13; II Corinthians 12:9-10; Philippians 4:13). Trials are for your good (Romans 5:3-5; James 1:2-4; I Peter 1:6-7); and, as you respond biblically, show forth the power of God in your life (II Corinthians 4:7-18, 12:9-10).

(Principle 81) In difficulties, God's comfort (Psalm 119:50; II Corinthians 1:3-5, 7:6a) and sustaining care are available to you (Psalm 34:8, 42:11, 46:1-3, 55:22, 145:14; Lamentations 3:32; Matthew 11:28-30; Hebrews 4:15-16).

III. Your change

(Principle 82) Put off disobedience to God's Word; put on living a disciplined, faithfully obedient life (*Genesis 4:7; Romans 6:11-13, 19; I Timothy 4:7-11*) out of a commitment to please God instead of yourself (*II Corinthians 5:14-15; Galatians 5:16-17*).

Also applicable:

(Principle 28, from Lesson 7, Page 2) In order to put off sinful habits, you must first identify them by examining (judging) your life in light of God's Word (*Matthew 7:1-5; I Corinthians 11:28-31; II Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12*). Once you have specifically identified sins in your life, you must repent of them (*Proverbs 28:13; II Corinthians 7:9-10; Revelation 2:5*), confess them (*I John 1:9*), and immediately put them aside (*Romans 6:12-13a; II Corinthians 10:5; Ephesians 4:25, 29, 31; 5:4; Colossians 3:2, 5-9*).

(Principle 29, from Lesson 7, Page 2) As you put on righteous deeds (*Titus 2:11-12*) in the power of the Holy Spirit (*Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 3:16-21, 5:18*), you are able to glorify God (*I Corinthians 10:31; I Peter 4:11*), to demonstrate your love for Him (*Deuteronomy 10:12; Matthew 22:37; I John 5:3; II John 1:6*), and to please Him in all things (*II Corinthians 5:9; Colossians 1:10*).

IV. Your practice

(Principle 83) Establish a biblical schedule for fulfilling your God-given responsibilities and keep the schedule regardless of any feelings of depression you may experience (*Ephesians 5:15-17; James 4:17*). Do all your responsibilities and tasks heartily as to the Lord and for His glory (*Matthew 5:16; I Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17, 23-24*). If you sin, confess this to the Lord (*I John 1:9*) and, as biblically appropriate, confess your sins to those against whom you have sinned (*James 5:16*).

Also applicable:

(Principle 14, revised from Lesson 5, Page 2) You must diligently examine yourself in a biblical manner (*Matthew 7:1-5; I Corinthians 11:31*) and obey God's Word consistently (*I John 2:3-6*) to grow increasingly into godliness (*I Timothy 4:7-8; II Peter 1:3-11*) and to realize true peace (*Psalms 119:165; John 16:33*) and joy (*John 15:10-11*).

(Principle 39, revised from Lesson 10, Page 2) Stop living to please yourself in daily situations, responsibilities, and relationships (*Luke 9:23-24; John 3:30, 12:24-26; Romans 12:3, 14:7-8; II Corinthians 5:15*) by following God's commandments (*Matthew 22:37-39*). Instead of living to please yourself, regard others as more important than yourself and be a servant to God and others (*Matthew 20:26-28; Luke 4:8; John 13:3-17, esp. verses 14-15; Romans 15:1-3; I Corinthians 9:19; 10:24, 32-33; Philippians 2:3-7; Colossians 3:23-24; I Peter 4:10*).

(Lesson 5, Page 3) and *THE UPWARD PATH: WALKING GOD'S WAY* (Lesson 5, Page 5).

IV. What is the biblical perspective on factors contributing to "depression?"

A. Physical factors

1. God has fearfully and wonderfully made your body (*Psalm 139:14*). As a believer, you have been redeemed with a price and are to exalt Christ and glorify God in your body (*I Corinthians 6:20; Philippians 1:20*). Proper care of your body is essential in accomplishing this goal. You are to present your body as a living and holy sacrifice to God, which is your spiritual service of worship (*Romans 12:1*).
- X 2. Since some physical conditions (for example, hormonal imbalance or organic and glandular dysfunctions) may contribute to your feeling depressed, it is important that a medical diagnosis be made and proper care be maintained whenever this type of condition is present or suspected. However, you are still responsible to respond biblically in any difficulty regardless of your feelings (such as Jeremiah did in Lamentations 3:31-32, 38-40; or as the Apostle Paul did in II Corinthians 12:7-10. - IN SPITE OF PAIN)
3. In the midst of physical difficulties, as you seek to be responsible (which includes seeking appropriate medical help) and are practicing biblical love in all your relationships, you will please God and will receive His strength and loving care (based on *Genesis 4:7; Psalm 34:19; 37:23-24; 119:143; 147:3, 6a; II Corinthians 12:9-10; Philippians 2:3-8; 4:13, 19; James 1:25*).

Also applicable:

(Principle 34, revised, from Lesson 9, Page 2) Remember who you are in Christ Jesus (*Romans 8:14-17; Ephesians 1:3-14; Colossians 2:9-12; I Peter 2:9-10*). As a child of God, you have the assurance that your Heavenly Father, out of His grace and mercy, is involved actively in your life (*Philippians 1:6, 2:13; I Peter 2:9-10; II Peter 1:3-4*) in spite of any natural inadequacies you have (*Psalm 62:9; Isaiah 64:6; John 15:4-5; II Corinthians 3:5*). While you are totally inadequate to live God's way in your own strength, God has chosen you to be a testimony of His power to the world (*Matthew 5:16; I Corinthians 1:26-31*), by conforming you to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ (*Romans 8:28-29; II Corinthians 3:18*).

(Principle 43, revised, from Lesson 10, Page 3) Thank God for any circumstances or physical conditions that you cannot correct (based on *II Corinthians 12:7-10; Ephesians 5:20; I Thessalonians 5:18*) and correct all actual deficiencies in your life that hinder you from serving God and edifying others (based on *Matthew 22:37-39; Romans 6:19, 14:12-13; I Corinthians 10:31-33; Philippians 2:12-16; Colossians 3:2-15; Hebrews 12:1-2; James 4:8, 17*).

B. All other factors

1. All things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose (*Romans 8:28*). God has started and will complete His work in you (*Philippians 1:6*), so trust Him (*Proverbs 3:5-6*), because He intends for you to be conformed to the image of His Son (*Romans 8:29*). He uses

the trials of life to accomplish that purpose (*Romans 5:3-5; James 1:2-4*) and to prove the reality of your faith (*I Peter 1:6-7*).

2. No matter what may occur in life, your loving obedience to God's Word (*John 14:15*) gives you an opportunity to die to self in order that you may live for Christ (*Luke 9:23-24; Galatians 2:20*). God has promised to take care of all your needs as you seek first His kingdom and righteousness (*Matthew 6:33*), by keeping your eyes firmly fixed on Jesus Christ (*Hebrews 12:1-2*) and following in His steps (*Matthew 11:29; John 13:12-17; I Peter 2:21-25*).

* *Note: God's Word never commands you to change your feelings, but you are commanded to change your deeds (thoughts, words, and actions) by being obedient to Scripture. God's commands are not burdensome (I John 5:3). Your obedience to God's Word is based on your love for the Lord Jesus Christ instead of being based on the unpredictability of your feelings (based on John 14:21, 23; II Corinthians 5:14-15; Galatians 5:16-17; I John 5:3).*

3. Biblical self-evaluation is necessary in every area of your life (*Matthew 7:1-5; I Corinthians 11:31*), which includes your actions (*Matthew 7:24-27; I Corinthians 13:4-8a*), your relationships with others (*Ephesians 5:21; Philippians 2:3-4*), your words (*Matthew 12:36-37; Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:6*), and your thought life (*II Corinthians 10:5; Colossians 3:2*). As you obey God's Word in all areas of your life, you will receive the Lord's blessing (*James 1:25*). If you are not obedient to God's Word, you will receive the Lord's corrective discipline (*I Corinthians 11:32; Hebrews 12:5-11*). Particular attention needs to be given to:

- a. Regular confession of sins to the Lord (*I John 1:9*) and, as biblically appropriate, to those against whom you have sinned (*James 5:16*);
- b. Faithfulness in prayer (*Colossians 4:2; I Thessalonians 5:17*);
- c. Diligence in the study of (*II Timothy 2:15*), meditation on (*Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:2*), and memorization of God's Word (*Psalm 119:11, 16*);
- d. Fellowship with other brothers and sisters in Christ (*Hebrews 10:23-25*); and
- e. Consistent ministry as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ (*I Peter 4:10*).

Cross-reference with BIBLICAL SELF-CONFRONTATION: AN ESSENTIAL FOR DISCIPLESHIP (Lesson 2, Page 6).

OVERCOMING DEPRESSION

LESSON 18 PG 6

SHEETS

DRUGS IN COUNSELING

GEN 3:1, GEN 4:7
JER 17:21, 23
READ LIGHT - SYMPTOM
OR A DEEPER PRB.
CONCLUSION.
JOHN 15:19, 11

① While feelings of depression may result from organic malfunctioning that can be medically diagnosed and treated,
② a variety of other factors may contribute to this situation as well. In spite of any contributing factors, you must not base your deeds (thoughts, words, and actions) on your feelings. Instead, you are to discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness. This means you are to obey Scripture in all circumstances (based on Matthew 5:16; 20:26-28; II Corinthians 5:14-15; Ephesians 5:15-16; Philippians 2:3-4, 14-15; 4:8-9, 11; Colossians 1:9-12, 2:6, 3:17; I Thessalonians 5:15-18; I Timothy 4:7-8; James 1:2-4).

I. Carefully review the following cross-references:

- A. The foundational, biblical requirements for change (Lessons 1 and 2), recognizing the differences between living man's way and living God's way (Lessons 3 and 4);
- B. The essential elements of biblical change (Lessons 5 - 8) as you die to self and live for the Lord (Lessons 9 and 10);
- C. The necessity of biblically dealing with any anger and bitterness in your life (Lesson 11);
- D. The applicability of this situation to "loving your neighbor" (Lessons 12 and 13) and family relationships (Lessons 14 - 17);
- E. The possible links between fear and worry (Lesson 19) and feeling depressed;
- F. The seriousness of life-dominating sins and their relationship to your problem of feeling depressed (Lessons 20 and 21); and
- G. The need for you to establish and faithfully maintain specific standards from God's Word for every area of your life (Lesson 22).

NOTE: If a medical diagnosis determines organic (physiological) dysfunction, alert your doctor of your desire to follow this **OVERCOMING DEPRESSION** plan simultaneously while you are under medical treatment.

The cross-references cited above are important in dealing with this specific problem area. In dealing with problems biblically, you must examine all aspects of your life. For example, the problem of depression cannot be overcome by dealing with it in isolation. Rather, any specific problem must be dealt with in light of scriptural principles for all of life. As you can see, references to previous lessons are listed in addition to those lessons not yet covered.

If you proceed in biblical counseling training, you will find that God's solutions as presented in this course apply to all problems, including those not covered in this Syllabus.

- II. To become aware of specific times and circumstances in which you feel depressed, use a DISCOVERING PROBLEM PATTERNS WORKSHEET (Supplement 7).
- III. Use the VICTORY OVER FAILURES WORKSHEET (Supplement 9). To complete columns 1-3, follow the instructions given in GUIDELINES: VICTORY OVER FAILURES WORKSHEET (Supplement 8).
- IV. When completing column four of the VICTORY OVER FAILURES WORKSHEET (Supplement 9):
- A. Develop a basic plan to overcome the sins you have recognized. In your plan, include deeds (thoughts, speech, and actions) that will help you develop a Christlike manner by taking into account the following guidelines:
1. Think biblically
 - a. Remember that God has promised to care for you in any situation, no matter how unsettling it may seem (*Psalm 23:1-6, 37:5; Proverbs 3:25-26; Matthew 10:28-31; I Corinthians 10:13; Romans 8:36-39*).
 - b. Confess all sinful thoughts to God (*I John 1:9*) and ask for His help in changing this sinful pattern (*based on I Thessalonians 5:17; Hebrews 4:15-16; James 1:5*). Know that all sins you have sincerely confessed to the Lord are totally forgiven in His sight (*Psalm 103:10-14; I John 1:9*).
 - c. Rejoice (*I Thessalonians 5:16*) and give thanks in and for every situation (*Ephesians 5:20; I Thessalonians 5:18*), knowing that endurance in trials helps conform you to the image of Jesus Christ (*based on Romans 5:3-5; James 1:2-4*).
 - d. Remember that God's forgiveness of you is the basis for you to forgive others (*Matthew 18:21-35; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13*).
 - e. Remember that your love for others demonstrates the love that you have for God (*I John 2:9-11; 3:14-16; 4:7-11, 20-21*).
 - f. Focus your thoughts on glorifying and pleasing God and on being a blessing to others in all situations (*based on Matthew 22:37-39; Luke 9:23-24; I Corinthians 10:31; II Corinthians 5:9, 15; 10:5; Galatians 5:16-17; Philippians 2:3-4, 4:8; Colossians 3:1-2*). Determine specific ways in which you can minister to others as a servant of Jesus Christ (*Matthew 5:16, 7:12, 20:26-28; I Peter 4:10*).
 - g. Within the very situation in which you find yourself, do not dwell on things that would lead to sin. Instead, discipline your mind to think on things that please the Lord (*Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:2*). Remember to pray for those who persecute you (*Matthew 5:44*).
 - h. Review psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs that you have memorized (*based on Ephesians 5:19-20; Colossians 3:16*).
 - i. Think of ways you can encourage other believers that can stimulate them to love and good deeds (*Hebrews 10:23-25*).
 - j. Remember that when you fail to meet your responsibilities biblically, you will sense guilt (*Genesis 3:1-8, esp. verses 7-8; Romans 7:18-24*), which, when not dealt with biblically, may lead to further guilt and possible symptoms or feelings of depression (*Psalm 32:3-4*).

2. Speak biblically

- a. Confess your current sins to those whom you have failed to love in a biblical manner, including the sins of failing to complete your responsibilities. Confess any other known sins that you have failed to confess earlier (based on Psalm 51:1-4; James 4:17, 5:16; I John 1:9).

To review how to confess your sins to those you have sinned against, refer to:

GUIDELINES: VICTORY OVER FAILURES WORKSHEET (Supplement 8) under VI. *Application of biblical change, point D. and RECONCILIATION (REMOVING ALL HINDRANCES TO UNITY AND PEACE)* (Lesson 12, Pages 6-8) under II. *Confession.*

- b. Do not complain about your present situation or about feelings of depression (Philippians 2:14-15). Do not speak about your past accomplishments (Proverbs 27:2, 30:32; II Corinthians 10:18), sorrows or defeats (Philippians 3:13-14), worries about the future (Matthew 6:34), comparing yourself to yourself and/or others (II Corinthians 10:12), or boastfully promising what you will do in the future (Proverbs 27:1; James 4:13-16). Instead, edify others by thankfully speaking of the goodness of the Lord and the recent difference He has made in your life in this situation (Luke 10:20; Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:6; Hebrews 13:15; I Peter 3:15).
- c. Do not slander, gossip, quarrel, or use words that do not edify others (Proverbs 10:18; Ephesians 4:29, 31; 5:4; Colossians 3:8; II Timothy 2:24; I Peter 2:1). Instead, let your speech be truthful and gracious, according to the need of the moment, that you may know how to answer each person (Ephesians 4:15, 25, 29; Colossians 4:6).
- d. Do not bring up another's sin in an accusing or vengeful manner, either to others, yourself, or to the person who has sinned (Proverbs 10:18, 17:9, 20:19; Ephesians 4:29, 31; Colossians 3:8; I Peter 2:1).
- e. Initiate and encourage others to be reconciled with God and yourself, whenever it is biblically appropriate to do so (Matthew 5:9, 23-24; Romans 12:18; II Corinthians 2:6-8, 5:18).
- Refer to **RECONCILIATION (REMOVING ALL HINDRANCES TO UNITY AND PEACE)** (Lesson 12, Pages 6-8).

3. Act biblically

- a. Since symptoms and feelings of depression can result from any number of factors, gather information to discover what may have contributed to your present situation (Proverbs 18:15; I Corinthians 11:31; James 1:5).
- 1) Read **UNDERSTANDING DEPRESSION** (Lesson 18, Pages 4-7). Keep track of all you do this week by using **MY PRESENT SCHEDULE** (Supplement 15).
 - 2) At the end of the week, evaluate what activities and responsibilities need to be eliminated.
 - 3) Also determine which biblical tasks and responsibilities have been neglected and need to be incorporated into your next week's schedule.
 - 4) Use **MY PROPOSED BIBLICAL SCHEDULE** (Supplement 16) to construct your plans for the coming week.
- b. Forgive others just as God has forgiven you (Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13).

Refer to **FORGIVENESS (FORGIVING OTHERS AS GOD HAS FORGIVEN YOU)** (Lesson 12, Pages 3-5) and determine if you are practicing biblical forgiveness. Make changes as necessary.

- c. Memorize Scripture verses and study Scripture passages specifically related to feeling depressed, your responsibilities, disciplined living, and God's care and sovereign plan for you (based on Psalm 119:9, 11, 16; II Corinthians 10:5; Philippians 4:8; II Timothy 2:15). For specific verses to memorize, refer to verses listed in **BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES: DEPRESSION** (Lesson 18, Pages 2-3).
- d. Memorize psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to be used at appropriate times, especially when you feel depressed (based on Ephesians 5:19-20; Colossians 3:16).
- e. Pray always with thanksgiving (Philippians 4:6; I Thessalonians 5:17-18) and according to God's will (I John 5:14-15). Cast all your cares on the Lord (I Peter 5:7), being anxious for nothing (Philippians 4:6-7) and pray for those who persecute you (Matthew 5:44). A constant practice of prayer helps you not to lose heart (Luke 18:1).

Refer to **PRAYER PROVIDES COMMUNICATION WITH GOD** (Lesson 3, Pages 9-12).

- f. Identify all danger signals - such as situations, places, and personal contacts that bring temptation - and take immediate steps to eliminate, resist, or flee the temptation (based on Psalm 1:1; Proverbs 27:12; I Corinthians 10:13, 15:33; II Timothy 2:22; James 4:7; I Peter 5:8-9).
- g. Make amends for wrongdoing and seek reconciliation with those you have offended (based on Matthew 5:23-24). Remember that although you have already confessed your sins (see 2. a. above), you need to demonstrate your serious intent to change.

See **RECONCILIATION (REMOVING ALL HINDRANCES TO UNITY AND PEACE)** (Lesson 12, Pages 6-8) under III. *Restitution* and IV. *The importance of reconciliation*.

- h. Bless others through tangible and genuine expressions of biblical love and service (this includes your daily responsibilities as a family member, student, employer, employee, roommate, etc.) (based on Matthew 7:12; Romans 12:9-13, 15-16; 13:8-10; I Corinthians 13:4-8a; Philippians 2:3-8; I Timothy 6:17-19; I Peter 3:8-9; I John 3:18). You are to do this:
 - 1) Regardless of how you feel (based on Genesis 4:7; II Corinthians 5:14-15; Galatians 5:16-17; Philippians 4:13; James 4:17);
 - 2) Especially to those who seem to be your enemies or to those against whom you have sinned (based on Matthew 5:23-24, 43-48; Mark 11:25-26; Romans 12:14, 17-21);
 - 3) With kindness and tenderheartedness for the very individuals with whom you are or have been irritated (Ephesians 4:31-32);
 - 4) By taking advantage of opportunities to minister, especially in ways that keep you in a Christlike servant attitude towards others (based on Matthew 20:25-28; Philippians 2:3-8; I Peter 4:10);

3. Immediately seek God's perspective.
 - a. Your peace and joy must be in the Lord and must not be dependent on other persons or circumstances in your life (*Psalm 119:165; Isaiah 26:3; John 14:27, 15:11, 16:33; Romans 14:17*).
 - b. Regardless of your feelings or circumstances, view this situation as an opportunity for further spiritual growth (*James 1:2-4*) because God will work all things together for good in your life (*based on Psalm 37; Proverbs 3:5-12; Romans 8:28-29; Ephesians 1:3-14; Philippians 1:6*).
 - 1) Remind yourself that you can do all things through Christ who gives you strength (*Philippians 4:11-13*), since your adequacy is from God and not from any natural "inner strength" (*II Corinthians 3:5*). Remember that you can do nothing fruitful apart from Jesus Christ (*John 15:5*).
 - 2) Praise and glorify God that He is sufficient in your areas of weakness (*II Corinthians 12:9-10*) and that He will keep you from stumbling and make you stand blameless and with great joy in the presence of His glory (*Jude 1:24-25*).
 - c. Know that God looks on your heart, not on your outward appearance (*I Samuel 16:7*). You must stand blameless before Him in your thoughts, whether others know about it or not (*based on Acts 23:1, 24:16; Romans 14:12; Ephesians 1:4, 4:1; Philippians 1:9-11, 2:14-15; Colossians 1:21-22*).
 - 1) If you even begin to think sinful thoughts in this unforeseen circumstance (such as doubting God's loving care or spending time in self-pity), confess them to the Lord (*I John 1:9*).
 - 2) Remember that it is not the amount of time or immensity of the sin (by human standards) by which you should judge yourself. Rather, the fact that you stopped going God's way even momentarily is what matters (*James 2:10, 4:17*).
4. Thank God that you are His servant in your present circumstance (*based on Ephesians 5:20; I Thessalonians 5:18*). Determine how you will give glory to God (*I Corinthians 10:31; I Peter 4:11*) and seek ways to edify others by serving them or by speaking wholesome, uplifting words, no matter how you may feel (*Ephesians 4:29; Philippians 2:3-4*).
5. Follow your contingency plan as necessary. Then, begin again to do those things written in your **basic plan** (*based on Proverbs 24:16; James 1:22-25*).

- 5) By practicing biblical stewardship to honor the Lord and to be of practical help to others (*based on Psalm 24:1; Matthew 25:14-29; I Corinthians 4:1-2; Ephesians 5:15; I Timothy 6:17-19; I Peter 4:10*). Refer to **BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF STEWARDSHIP** (Lesson 10, Pages 4-6) and **DYING TO SELF BY SERVING OTHERS** (Lesson 10, Pages 7-8).

For specific examples of how and when to express biblical love, even in difficult situations, refer to THE MEANING OF BIBLICAL LOVE (Lesson 13, Pages 4-6).

- i. Whenever necessary, conduct a "conference table" using the plan outlined in **OVERCOMING PROBLEMS THROUGH BIBLICAL COMMUNICATION (GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING A CONFERENCE TABLE)** (Lesson 15, Pages 6-9).
- j. Correct deficiencies in your life that exist because of a lack of discipline or neglect (*based on Colossians 3:1-17; I Timothy 4:7b; James 4:17*).
- k. Begin to do what you know God wants you to do in order to please Him, whether you feel like it or not (*Genesis 4:6-7; Ephesians 4:1; Colossians 1:10; James 4:17*). Review your biblical tasks and responsibilities that you have scheduled on **MY PROPOSED BIBLICAL SCHEDULE** (Supplement 16) and maintain this schedule in a diligent manner during the coming week (*based on Ephesians 5:15-17; Colossians 3:17, 23-24*).

NOTE: God will bless your obedience to His Word (James 1:25). For example, enthusiasm may or may not follow your obedience to Him; but, you are to obey first, not waiting for your feelings to change. If you wait for your feelings to change, you may never begin, let alone finish your responsibilities. Also, do not try to change your feelings; you can't. God never commands you to feel a certain way, but you are to live a life of obedience to Scripture (John 14:15, 21; I John 5:3; II John 1:6).

1. If you need help, ask a Christian friend to hold you accountable for carrying out your **basic and contingency plans** until you have established a new pattern of godly living (*Proverbs 27:17; Ecclesiastes 4:9-10; Hebrews 10:23-25*). If necessary, seek biblical counsel from others (*Proverbs 11:14, 15:22*).

- B. As necessary, develop a **"THINK AND DO" LIST** (Supplement 11) using **GUIDELINES: THE "THINK AND DO" LIST** (Supplement 10).
- C. Implement your **basic plan** (*James 1:22*) and do it heartily for the Lord (*Colossians 3:23-24*).
- D. Develop a **contingency plan** to deal with unusual situations that provide temptation for you to sin by failing to fulfill responsibilities or by neglecting to confess your sins to God and to those against whom you have sinned (*based on Psalm 1:1; Proverbs 27:12; II Timothy 2:22; James 4:17, 5:16; I John 1:9*). Take into account the following guidelines:
 1. Immediately ask God for help (*I Thessalonians 5:17; Hebrews 4:15-16; James 1:5*).
 2. Review your memorized Scripture verses that deal specifically with God's provision in this situation to avoid a sinful focus on self (*based on Psalm 119:9, 11, 16*).